



DC Business Connections

An Examination of CEO Attitudes, Opinions and Needs

January 2003 Report

DC Business Connections is Mayor Anthony Williams' corporate outreach and business retention program operated by the Washington DC Marketing Center.

Corporate Relations Specialists meet with key decision makers to thank them for contributing to the District's economy. During the meeting, the Specialists gauge CEO attitudes and opinions about doing business in the District, as well as identify issues or questions which can be referred to any of the 30 *DC Business Connections* partners for response.

Chief Executive Officers representing roughly 1,000 diverse District-based firms have taken part in *DC Business Connections* since April 2000. This participation rate makes *DC Business Connections* one of the most ambitious and successful city-based business retention programs anywhere in the nation.

This briefing summarizes and compares business intelligence for 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Key Employment Findings...Then and Now

Employment-related issues have subsided in the District as the national economy has cooled.

	2000	2001	2002
Have problems finding qualified employees	68%	51%	34%
Have one or more job openings today	68%	50%	37%
Companies with 50% or more employees living in the District	17%	21%	34%





Key Competitiveness Findings...Then and Now

Competitive factors remain strong among District companies; however, exporting has waned in the face of global uncertainty and the economic downturn.

	2000	2001	2002
Use electronic commerce	N/A	93%	92%
Engage in government procurement	44%	43%	46%
Export goods/services outside US	52%	45%	25%

How CEOs Feel About Doing Business in the District Today

CEO optimism with the District's business climate has grown dramatically over the past three years.

	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Neutral	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative	Unsure/NR
2000	33%	47%	12%	6%	1%	1%
2001	49%	36%	6%	5%	1%	3%
2002	55%	34%	8%	2%	1%	0%

CEOs Rate the City's Business Climate Versus 5 Years Ago

CEOs who believe the District's business climate is "much better" attribute the improvements, in large part, to Mayor Williams and his administration.

	Much Better	Somewhat Better	Unchanged	Somewhat Worse	Much Worse	Unsure/NR
2000	38%	43%	10%	2%	2%	5%
2001	51%	30%	9%	3%	0%	7%
2002	55%	23%	6%	3%	3%*	10%

**Companies in 2002 where the CEO has answered that the business climate is "somewhat" or "much worse" than it was 5 years ago are primarily for-profit enterprises commenting about how their business has been hit hard by the economy.*

Municipal and Regional Public Service Rankings

Good-to-Excellent rankings are on the rise.

	2000*	2001*	2002*
Airport Facilities	91%	93%	94%
Economic Development	29%	41%	51%
Energy/Utilities	60%	65%	62%
Fire Protection	61%	70%	71%
Parks/Recreation	49%	58%	70%
Police Protection	60%	70%	78%
Public Schools	2%	7%	8%
Public Transportation	80%	85%	88%
Public Water/Sewer	50%	56%	56%
Road Systems	7%	17%	30%
Telecommunications	67%	65%	72%
Trash Removal	48%	54%	58%
Zoning/Land Use	26%	27%	43%

**Good-to-excellent rankings only*

Heard Around Town —Recurring CEO Attitudes and Opinions in 2002

"The city is listening to the business community now. It has not always been the case. Before there was a lot of lip service, the city is making conscientious efforts to deal with the issues."

-A large financial services/banking firm

"We love the District and are extremely excited about being here!"

-A small legal services firm

"Great city to be in. We are close to the Federal Government."

-A mid sized association

"The mayor is very visible and he is doing a great job."

-A mid sized association

"DC is moving forward fast and that is great."

-A small translation firm

"The commitment to excellence and achievement, has improved 1000 fold. The current Mayor has the idea that fiscal responsibility is #1. This should be the beacon for the nation."

-A small architectural firm

"The business climate has improved tremendously since Mayor Williams came to power."

-A small association

"We can attribute the improvement to Mayor Williams, being business friendly. We appreciate his efforts to keep the city vibrant, safe and beautiful."

-A large legal services firm

"It's a very consistent place. It doesn't suffer from fluctuation in business as other places in the country do. It's a much more stable business environment."

-A small engineering and architectural firm

"We are excited to be here. There are a lot of opportunities for businesses and we have a real niche to fill."

-A small insurance firm

